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# A WRITERS WORKSHOP REDBIRD BOOK

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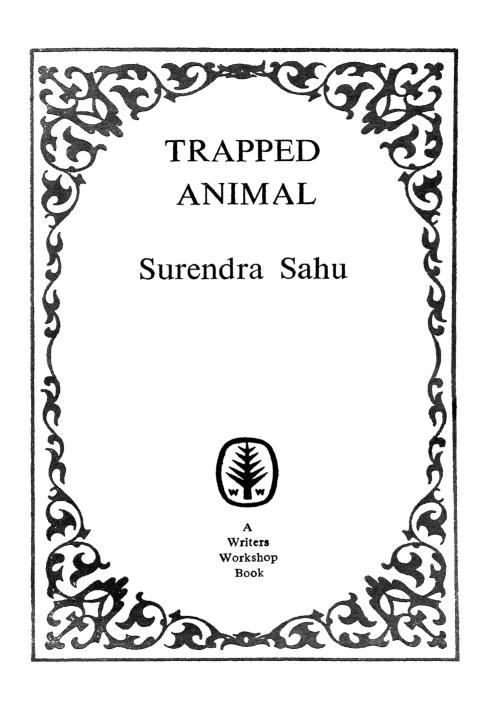
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Hand-set in Times Roman typeface and printed by Suman Dhar on an Indian-make hand-operated machine at Sreeram Mudrani, Calcutta 700032, on offset paper made in India. Layout and lettering by P. Lal. Handbound with handloom sari cloth woven in India. This book is entirely hand set, letter by letter, as a result, minor printer's gremlins are sometimes regrettably unavoidable.

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WRITERS WORKSHOP a small non-profit and non-political publishing house devoted to Indian creative writing in English. WRITERS WORKSHOP books are published by P. Lal from 162/92 Lake Gardens, Calcutta 700045, India. Telephone: 42-2683 & 46-8325. A descriptive 72-page checklist of over 1500 books of poetry, drama, fiction, criticism, reference, and transcreation is available on payment of Rs 5.





Born in 1950 in Suramani village in Ganjam District of Orissa, he was educated in different Schools in Orissa. A product of the Queen of Missions High school. Berhampur, and Revanshaw College, Cuttack, he graduated in Mechanical Engineering in 1971 from the Regional Engineering College, Rourkela. After serving in public sector organisations in Sunabeda and Durgapur, he joined in a managerial capacity in the Indian Ordnance Factories of the Central Government in 1972 and worked till 1989. During 1981-82 he studied for a year at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, for the Fellow Programme in Management. In July 1989, he resigned from service: he now lives in Mudhol, Karnataka with his family. His poems have earlier appeared in various house journals. He is currently engaged in compiling a book of quotations and is working on a novel titled Seven Hundred Hours. His next book of poems is titled Impressions. He has a daughter and two sons. His other interests include stamp collection and photography.



This book is dedicated to the memory of Nachiketa, Gita, Bidyadhar, Biswamohan, Madhavi, Frieda, Jayasree and Anjini.



I am thankful to my wife Madhavi, and children Gita, Kuna and Sonu, who stood by me during adverse times. I am grateful to my father and mother for providing emotional support during a difficult phase in my life. I am grateful to all the persons who attracted me towards them and made this volume of poems possible.



Why another book of poetry? Mankind has lived for centuries. Numerous authors have captured the emotions, tribulations and dreams of their times. But every author has a right to put on record the emotions and impressions he experiences during his lifetime; possibly he could discover some eternal "truth" worthy of notice by other fellow beings. This collection is an effort towards this end. The reader must decide whether he comes across any "truths" in this volume.



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### CABARET DANCER

She resembled my beloved
She had a special name
Her body was luxuriant
Her hair jet black and silky
She danced best of all
She smiled like a beloved
Then she seemed serious
Everyone praised her
I felt as I used to feel
With her
Years back
It was time to leave the restaurant
She emerged from the green room
Looking like a lady.

# TIRED MEMORIES

Memories of you slip into
Tired eyes
Mind tries to create you
Your charm and your reactions
You made me so happy when we
Were together
The sheer thought of those moments
Rejuvenates me and renews my faith
In life
I try to keep myself alive
For another day
For it cannot be unbearable
When it promises to bring your
Memories.

## FIRST LOVE

The soul had made A surrender That was total and unconditional To the first love A love that lived Through thick and thin After she leaves It tries time and again To win hearts Uncertain smiles blossom Amidst doubts and fears When the flame is over It tries to picture the first love Making frantic efforts To find some new bonds Of love and tears.

## DAYS OF WAITING

We fought regularly When were are together I feel your absence now And realise your worth You too miss me We will be happy when we meet And be happy until events Separate us Life is painful In your absence Our lives are complete When we are near I feet lost when you are away This undesirable and unavoidable Separation makes us More considerate to each other And we try to understand Each other's feelings.

# **IMPRESSIONS**

Your glowing face and rosy cheeks
Your smiles and grave looks
Swinging and breathtaking walk
Sweet and innocent talk
Fig-red lips sans make-up
Bashful eyes
Irritating jests
Laughing maid of one moment
Looking wise the other
Puzzle me, your lover.

## **SUMMONS**

Now I can flow
The willing tears
At a moment's notice
With just a thought of you.
The obstacles to our union
Make me resigned and philosophical.
Yet I go on thinking of you
Summoning all my wisdom and courage.
The trap of your love
Will prevent me from being an animal.
For it is real.

## FINAL ACT

I used to be anxious
For the vagarles of your love
But now I have no regrets
For you love me and show it
What eternal bliss it is
To love and be loved
Our passions have left us
And we are cool burning souls
Finding solace only in us.

### YOUR SMILE

Your smile
Travelled from your eyes
To greet mine
Witnessed by looks
Of mutual admiration.
Deep, sweet and swift moments passed by.
My attempts to free myself of you
Were in vain.
And I was clinging to you
With greater force and a belief
Of perpetual union
Whenever that smile arrived.

#### REPRIEVE

Time has turned One's pitch dark head Into bulky strands of silver The intolerable pain of Losing the company of one's beloved Cannot be recollected now Death reminds one often enough That one cannot be too happy or Too grieved We try to live with our past But past must give in To present and future We are clay in hands of time To be moulded to be able to live on We cannot decide what we want From this life And life withers and is dragged In bewilderment and indecision

#### ANCIENT LOVE

I used to long to cling to you Then I tried to break away From you Now after years When I think of you I can find no bond between us We are again strangers When we shall meet gain We will be feeling Pain not out of anguish But while giving philosophical smiles How we were slaves To the commands of time And we will embrace To our heart's content With no mores, no inhibitions And do whatever our hearts Will command us Ignoring all customs, barriers And be glad that Our suffering was Not in vain

## UNION OF SOULS

I had thought the union of our bodies
To be union of our souls
In adolsscent myopia
True, our affections had reached their climax
In this affair
That seemed divine and natural
As we separated
Doubts had lurked in our minds
Was it just a temptation and a moral downfall
Yet your memory lingers
Long after the pleasure forgotten
Persuading me to give
A degree of sanctity
To the whole episode.

#### THE JOURNEY

Your slim marble body
A bonanza of love and tenderness
My desires are no longer innocuous
And I am no more innocent
I stare at you with the eyes of a predator
Fear drums in your ears
A few pearls seem to trickle down your cheeks,
But I mingle with you with all my strength
While an unresisting body looks on.
Was it all inevitable?
Our bodles braced for a seemingly
Summit session of souls
And to engage me in a lifetime of repentance
And perhaps to mark the last stop in a journey
Of innocence and fulfilment.

## **PAST**

That youth When I thought of her And she appeared before my eyes In every pensive mood My hypnotised eyes Loved to get a glimpse of her And tried to be a true friend to her My dried throat Could not utter the message of my heart, My pretensions As if I did not know ber, My frantic searches To locate helplessness in her eyes-Are no more possible I am too late and too frail To . . .

### A MEMORY

A memory
Haunts me
In my every moment
Or when I hear a sad song
And fills my eyes with tears
Those cannot flow out
And take the breath out of my lungs
And leave behind an aching heart
Why do I treasure such a memory
For memory's sake?

### **SHADOW**

I started loving her With a smile and a few sweet words I tried to be closer to her She fumed and humiliated me Later, perhaps she started to like And pity me I tried to hate her But in vain As time went by I came closer to her Yet she never showed her reactions To my initiatives She chose to be silent She humiliated me no longer I tried to forget her I was not successful Her memory clings to me Like my shadow.

#### **MIRAGE**

Why do we crave for victory
And sadden at the thought of a defeat?
Today's tears will blossom into tomorrow's smiles
It is all a matter of time
Today's sorrow seems never-ending and unbearable
Yet this very soul will weather many a winter,
Absorbing the footprints of pain and agone
Today's repentant mind will turn into tomorrow's extrovert
The skin will age and our body will malfunction
With each of our victorles
Let us not bak in the sunshine of victory
We are conpenned to continual misery
Each seeming triumph
Is only victory of time over time.

## THE SEARCH

I search for you In every corner of my heart I find you at last In my eyes Rolling out as a hot tear drop. Is love ephemeral, and short-lived? You are out of sight But not out of my mind. What binds us? We were not lovers nor friends I just liked you And you spoke to me a couple of times Rather just answered my questions We did not converse You chose to be silent Most of the time Silence has made you Lovelier many more times I cannot forget you All I can do is To continue loving you For ever Silently without grudge.

### THE EYES

The eyes pine for a look Of you A guilty conscience somehow Cannot deter them For not wishing They do not regret Because none except you Tries to understand them They are only "eyes" For the rest of the world Not the mirror for somebody's Much cared-for make-up Needing a much-wished applause Nor the object For hours of gaze during times When the soul needs Support, companionship and love.

## THE CLOUD OF TEARS

What if you are far away in time and distance
The face dances continuously before my mind's esreen
As I struggle for an orgasm
In the ill-famed streets of the city
And try to locate resemblances of love
On a sympathetic fallen's face
A grim smile and a gloomy certainty
Hover on my face
Time does not heal
It only dusts impressions
And dries up wounds
To generate clouds of tears
Like the natural rain-cycle.

#### LIFE

What is this life
Without destination
No aim seizes me
I live on like an uprooted plant
On the river Hooghly
I slowly toil
For every drop of sweat brings sweet things
At the end
Two hot drops of tears
Struggle to see the light of day
In the womb of eyes
I don't love my lost-loves
For I now love everything
Be it sin, vice, crime or virtue
For the sake of sheer experience.

### TO BE IN LOVE

I had thought I could never love again But that was not to be Emotions and feelings Are again germinating in my decrepit soul Eyes swollen with tears and sleeplessness I look for your nervous glances What do I expect from our relationship? A few smiles and a few droplets of happiness To be drowned in the sea Of misery and helplessness Why cannot I choose to be rational? I cannot For I am Hopelessly in love With you

## A TAIE OF TEARS

A pain Spirals through my heart The beloved who used to fulfil my world With abundant joy Is its source The pain kills me But still I cannot hate The heartless and infidel woman Because I once loved her And it cannot happen that I can hate her now I curse my fate And her Yet I cannot help Looking at her With my erstwhile Admiring eyes.

### THE STONY BELOVED

She has converted her heart Into an impregnable stone All my sight and sleepless nights Had no effect on her My assumption of our links Of many births was only blind-belief I looked foolish in all my attempts To woo her And she thought them to be funny So love turned into a farce I resolved that She no longer existed for me For all her cruelty and heartlessness She has to pay the price And some day I will make merry At her tears, misery and helplessness For I have had my share.

### TRANSIENCE

How short-lived
Are the feelings of love
For the broken heart
It lives in the world of make-believe
A true feeling does not blossom
For fear of pain and futility
Yet it enraptures the soul
For the moment it convinces
And what is left at the end
Is only slow annihilation
And philosophical grins
And a resolve to
Never to fall in love again.

## MOMENTS OF BLISS

Moments, when one is engaged
In dissecting the speech of the beloved's eyes
Moments, when the overfed sun
Descends in royal grandeur
Amidst the riot of crimson
Moments, when the trees dance
Like drunken youths with the cool breeze
Moments, when the moon smiles
To the invitation of a nudging sky
Moments, when sleep comes to the eyes
After a commotion of thoughts—
Are not these moments of bliss?

#### **ALIENATION**

The horrifying darkness of solitude
Makes one nervous and fearful
After the first-love
Has disappeared from one's life,
None remains whom one can
Please or hurt
Amidst the crowd of humanity
The soul turns lonely and worn
The taste of mundane pleasures
Still leaves the heart hungry and dumb
Insecurity and anxiety haunt every moment
One turns into an alien
On one's own soil.

## **STRATEGY**

The storm of desire
Has turned him into
A savage and blind soul
Brussed, fallen and cheated
He begs the soul-less ceiling for pardon
With awe and helplessness
Preparing defences
For his scruples
With the reason-tool.

#### **PASSIONS**

He loves freedom
And abhors restraint
So, he obeys his passions.
He knows it to be immoral
But he outsmarts his scruples
And dives into the sea of vice.
Time and again
Fresh pledges and renewed surrenders
Characterise his relations
With his passions.
All the while he prides himself
For being wiser and sadder.

## FLIGHT OF TIME

I was kissing her red lips under the staircase
And soon feeling her tiny ivory breasts
Under the shower
On some silly pretext.
She was a plastic lump at that moment
We perhaps needed each other
In building up our broken strings
Now surrendering to animal impulses.
I am an estranged body
As the midnight breeze
Bathes my open limbs
I pledge to be faithful
To your memories
Before I irresistibly jump
Into a whore's bed.

## THE DILAPIDATED

Broken health and zeal
Stresses and strains of routine life
None loving and dear
Around one's glances
Clouds of gloom hover
Loved ones no longer remember
Fake laughs and shaking hopes
Hasten the process of decay
Of a young and tender soul.

#### THE THEME

I choose you
For my verses
For you so constantly occupy my mind
Incidents with you
Flit by my docide eyes
I repeat "you" in my work
With minor variations
Like the morning winds of Jaunary
My love for you is compartmentalised
For it does not prevent me from loving another
Demands of flesh are hard to resist
Demands of mind are harder to satisfy
I buoy in your love
And my sighs.

#### THE CRAVING

A thought springs from rusted memories
Of a charm, grown distant by time's sweep
Of a beauty, staled by the fleeting years
Of a simple girl turned cynical in an insincere world
Of a beloved, who generates less heart-throbbing
And I slowly turn myself in bed
At midnight
To bring myself close to your bosom
With tenderness and love.

# **IMAGE**

Unfulfilled plans
Turn me into a poet
That I may record the agonies
Of separated moments
And the surges of the preserved feelings
Or perhaps to enable other men
To brand me a neurotic.

## A THOUGHT

I could now not act like a hero
And offer you the haven of matrimony
For I am well-to-do
Although experienced, I possibly could
Talk to you
Like a novice in love
And possibly I could have
"Made you happy".

## **PRETENSION**

We used to pretend
As if we did not love each other
Having pressed many public lips
I look for that virginity
In my fouled lips
I pretend as if
Nothing had happened
To me and us.

## LUST

So-called vice and lust
Proveid food for my lonely moments
And my poetry
Guiltiness makes me dormant
Life that is stripped
Of guilt and fears
Is like
A dreary note of music
A moss gathering stone
An ice cold desire.

## **CEASE-FIRE**

Feelings burn in the heat of tears
With a moribund heart
Pain and the future taunt
Threatening with dire consequences
Hopelessness
Is the only symptom
Of the forlorn and deserted soul.

#### THE MONSTER

The germs of death and despondency
Eat into the cells of
My body and morale
I bruise and hurt myself
To escape from the agonies
Of your memories.
Chance is my only saviour now
And fate is my only companion
And penury is my only enemy
And love is my only horror
And the soothing hands of
One-time "love"
Dreads me like a monster.

# MOMENTS OF DESPAIR

He lives on and on
With hopes
Of meeting her some time
And seeing in her eyes
His image and thoughts
Pain, infamy and sterility
Are all that he had earned
And he has learnt
To love her more intensely and calmly
Even in these moments of despair.

## THE SIMILE

You used to call me
An inhuman person
While I was gripping
You like a magnet
During our love encounters
Now, I am perhaps truly inhuman
Or else what you would
Call a soul
Wedded
To immorality, infidelity and promiscuity
Without regrets.

## THE CONNECTION

I burn like a cigar
Slowly but steadily
In the pangs of your separation
The red lips that used to set me once aflame
In the twilight of desire
Are faint and dull now
Along my memory lane
And you wake up
Like a phoenix on the mind's screen
To witness
A guilty conscience and castaway soul.

#### PROCESS OF DECAY

With years your image
Become dim
As I lie and think of you
Tears well up in my eyes
A lot of them
But not enough to form a tide
They make my vision blurred
Of you and our relationship
The heart beats slowly
The process of forgetting begins
Forecasting an end
I will have to live long enough
To answer this
And many other queries.

## HARMLESS PASTIME

He likes (almost automatically)
To scribble your name
A thousand times
On blank spaces of diaries et al
In the vain hope of
Winning your confidence
He is probably dead in your thoughts
And you have become moribund in his
Yet an invisible tie seems
To bind you with him
It breaks for a spell
And gets joined again
With the regularity of a raga.

#### **MIDNIGHT**

You run wildly like a dream
Before my mind's eye
Releasing sardonic smiles
With astonished looks
And a nervous bosom
Wishes me good night
And lulls me into some
Desperate sleep
As the tired body gradually
Becomes still.

## **INSPIRATION**

The sense of gloom
Sticks like a leech-on-human-body
The void inside my breast still
Remains unfulfilled
Even after years of separation.
Life to me seems intolerable
Without some definite aim.
And aim eludes me
For I desire nothing.
Reunion for better or worse
Is the only panacea
For a lost opportunity
And I wait patiently for
An urge and an impulse.

#### REFLECTION

I love to recall those precious-for-me moments When you had met me as a stranger I could see nothing except innocence And harmlessness in your eyes And how your speech was nervous And you radiated hope I know I was yours from that instant But I could never imagine That one day you would hate me Openly, but keep my love letters Preserved in your inaccessible briefcase And dread to burn them Perhaps believing that life May show its tricks again You would make no conscious attempt To understand me and my heart, Although I cling on to the Reflection of our love.

## THE TRANSIENT

A hopeless soul
Meeting strangers
In public places
Beautiful faces return
Glances
Hopes of chase are born
And when the destination
Comes, it resigns
Dreading the unpredictable
Path of love.

#### PRISONER

Your beauty radiates a purple glow
After that most-cared-bath
The charm does send
Ripples of desire through my anxious body
I hope this is not lust
For when lust is satisfied
The heart turns blank and repentant
But every day I come back to you
Like the pull of gravitation
With renewed interest and appreciation
With no sense of guilt whatsoever
You ask me to go away
But that is not what you really wish
Yon wish me to praise your charms
Nonetheless, I am deeply excited.

#### THE DIFFERENCE

Your pining look
Can no longer arouse
Those lusty and anxious glances
In me
Contented like a beast-of-prey
After its catch
I can no longer feel
I am now as harmless as a doe
Perhaps you can sleep
In my arms
With no fears of assault
But I doubt if you
Will care to notice me
In my wretched state.

## THE IDLE HOUR

Every love song Reminds me of you And I begin to recollect With partial success I try to hope But I am hopeless And decrepit By years of apathy One love-letter Keeps you alive in me My only food of past and future A similar face Propels me to explore the buried memories "I am lucky with some finds" A slow-heaving heart And sunken eyes cheer me up And make me plunge into Another year of Retrospection and indecision Forecasting a probable Perpetual union (who knows?).

## LOVING

A short encounter
A chunk of smile
A little touch
Hopes and disappointments
Love and hate
Still pleasure in this
Does it convey the
Meaning of life?
Still desirable and
The balm of helpless moments
That is "loving".

#### **ICEBERG**

People say Life is motion Towards a goal, a destination But I who had once a mission Have no goal, no target now I am not restless with the Dullness of my life or actions Memories are shattered Beyond redemption Familiar faces are faded and constantly Fading away No new faces can I endear I bear the pall of gloom And I allow myself to be swayed By vices, passions and evanescent glories A lone desire to create Persuades me to write And I wait for the Soothing hands of Death Like an iceberg Waiting to self-immolate Under the bright mild rays of the sun.

## **RESIDUE**

The emotional adolescent
Falls in love
For that is the inescapable
Necessity of youth
He writes verses in praise of her
Charm, beauty and grace
A day comes when she leaves him
Or he leaves her
They try to forget each other
But a sense of duty lives
With both of them
While they seek their self-realisation
In the abyss of worldly search.

#### **EXPERIMENTALIST**

How strange
The virginest young man
Turns into the savagest outcaste
For he wants to verify
The message of his shattered heart
Love is always the same
Whether it's with your classmate
Or the ill-famed wench
The genius is bound to be different
For he dares the path
Of non-conformity and professes openly
Private beliefs of all
"He can never be wise: or else
Why should he knowingly suffer
In search of truth?"

## THE TENDER MOMENT

The desire is born
And the whole body
Catches fire
Passive looks and thoughts
Reign the preceding hours
Resulting in the senseless jump
A struggle continues for mutual satisfaction
When the "final point" comes
An agitated body finds rest
For a couple of hours
Or perhaps days
After a few deep breaths
Of satisfaction.

## THE EPILEPTIC EMOTION

As the midnight approaches
Memories of past love
Seize me
Two deep draughts of air
Escape my heated nostrils
As my eyes look into them
In my faithful but cheap mirror
A weary body
Pulls shutters of mind
A haze remains
Of past pleasures and pains
Driving me into a stone-dead sleep.

#### ONE-SIDED LOVE

My love was disgusting to her So she said But why did her eyes seem to convey That she loved me Even after the fighting Why does she seem to be repenting her actions Even after being humiliated I like her and want to be near her Time only will tell how this affair Would turn out to be Dumb and tired eyes Tell my story Why was I destined to suffer like this? Yet her charming face Effaced all pain And made me forget All her tortures and taunts And I think it was worth the suffering.

#### **CHALLENGE**

The body
Continues to live on
Amidst fears of the future
The world challenges
The soul turns meek
Having weathered many a storm
Doubts and unhappiness persist
A ray of hope
Flatters the soul
It looks up and beyond
We cannot achieve all we want
The thoughts of future
Generate new courage
And the will to face them.

# TRANSFORMED FEELINGS

As years go by You become lovelier in memory The heart turns grateful For the happy moments Your presence lent to this short life I tell you very gently I love you As I whisper to you In the midst of dumb air and walls I yearn for a rebirth Then it would seem so easy For us to unite For numerous are the woes Of this life For both of us I entreat you to give me your company At least in dreams.

#### **HUMANITY**

So-called human beings Pass by the accumulated filth Lying by the footpath Of a metro city Putting hankies to their noses A leper woman Half-clad and half-dead Lies on the footpath Of the busy road While raindrops Lash her body People pass by Without looking Without thinking Why is it that we Cannot think of the Deprived How can we be so cruel Wanting more for us Thinking only of our well-being And forgetting the environment?

#### YOU AND ME

I pine for you
Lying on the lonely bed of the hotel
While trying to sleep on the sleeper bed
Of the moving train
When I look at the eyes of the woman
Sitting lonely on the grassfield
When remembering Sin and God
On the hospital bed
When I stare into the
Eyes of my angry wife
When I think of you
At every lonesome moment.

#### LIFE'S JOURNEY

What is life But activity, work and work Desires remain in the womb of mind They get fulfilled Like flowers bloom in succession We search for the meaning of life And happiness Frustrations stare at us We try to be happy We attend one more funeral The gases and smoke from the burning dead Remind us of our end We resolve for a moment To be good and virtuous and useful We must toil in our gardens ceaselessly A new crop, a new bloom Awaits our admiring and grateful eyes.



Writers Workshop Indian Greative Writing in English

# Writers Workshop

WRITERS WORKSHOP was founded in 1958. It consists of a group of writers who agree in principle that English has proved its ability, as a language, to play a creative role in India literature, through original writing and transcreation. Its task is that of defining and substantiating the role by discussion and diffusion of creative writing and transcreation from India, the Commonwealth, and other English-using countries.

Discussions are held on Sunday morning at 162/92 Lake Gardens, Calcutta 700045, India, and diffusion done through a series of books issued under the WORKSHOP imprint. Since 1971 the WORKSHOP has laid increasing emphasis on its publishing programme. A complete, descriptive 72-page illustrated checklist of over 1500 books and cassettes is

available for Rs 5.

The WORKSHOP is non-profit and non-political. It consists of writers symphthetic to the ideals and principles commonly accepted as embodied in creative writing; it is concerned with practice not theorising, helpful criticism not iconoclasm, the

torch not the sceptre.

The WORKSHOP publishes a periodical book-journal, The New Miscellany, devoted to creative writing. It is not a house magazine; as a rule it gives preference to experimental work by young and unpublished writers, its two chief criteria for selection being high imaginative awareness and mature technique. Established writers appear in its pages if their work meets those standards. The New Miscellany does not carry advertising. Sufficient postage (registered mail) should accompany book manuscripts and magazine submissions if their return is desired.

One can become a Member or an Associate by written application to the Secretary, which requires the supports of two members and approval by majority on committee. Members are writers with published work to their credit. To be an Associate requires agreement with the aims and objects of WRITERS WORKSHOP, active interest in creative writing, and a willingness to lend practical assistance to WORKSHOP activities. Subscription to The New Miscellany automatically confers Associate membership. Further details are available from the Director, P. Lal, at the WORKSHOP address; 162/92 Lake Gardens, Calcutta 700045 (Phone: 46-8325 and 42-2683).

Ondian Creative Writing in English